

## GE/GM CROPS COULD END ORGANIC FARMING

Organic farming will be forced out of production in Britain and across Europe if genetically engineered/modified (GE/GM) crops are grown commercially, says a startling new EU report.

The report—which is so controversial that top EC officials tried to stop its release—shows that organic farms will become so contaminated by genes from the new crops that they can no longer be licensed or farmers will have to spend so much money trying to protect themselves that their farms will become uneconomic. Conventional non-GM farms will also be seriously affected.

Drawn up as a result of two years of studies in Britain, France, Italy and Germany, the report provides the most damning confirmation to date of the arguments, long advanced by environmentalists, that it is not possible for GM and organic farming to co-exist. The report, which looks at the effects of growing modified maize, potatoes and oilseed rape commercially on several types of farms, warns that genes from GM crops will travel long distances, creating superweeds.

And in Canada, there is confirmation of something canola farmers have been saying



for years: that genetically modified canola is popping up where it wasn't planted and where it isn't wanted.

An Agriculture Canada study suggests the problem is in the seeds. More than half of the seed samples tested showed some level of GM presence. The study's authors conclude that means almost every canola field planted with conventional seed will contain some genetically modified seed. (Sources: *The Independent*, May 26, 2002; <http://www.independent.co.uk>; *CBC News Online*, June 28, 2002; <http://cbc.ca/stories/2002/06/27/gncanola020627>)

## MICE REJECT GM FOOD!

After hearing of a farmer's observations that mice appeared unwilling to eat GE/GM grain if given a choice, 17-year-old Dutch undergraduate Hinze Hogendoorn decided to investigate further. He obtained 30 female six-week-old mice from a herpetology centre (these rodents were bred to be fed to snakes) and some rodent feed mix with cereals and oatmeal specified to be "GM-free". He also bought some GM maize and soya.

The mice were let loose in big cages with two piles of food—one GM and one non-GM—stacked in four bowls. Overwhelmingly, the mice showed a preference for non-GM grains over GM food.

Interestingly, the mice did not like eating the soya meal, whether GM or non-GM.

Hinze then conducted a series of other tests to find out what would happen when the mice were force-fed with GM foods. The group fed GM ate more, but they gained less weight. By the end, they actually lost weight. In contrast, the group fed non-GM ate less and gained more weight, continuing to gain weight until the end of the experiment.

That was not the only difference observed. The mice fed GM food "seemed less active while in their cages". The differences in activity between the two cages grew as the experiment progressed: the mice in the non-GM cage were in the exercise wheel more often than those in the GM cage. The most striking difference was that the mice fed GM food were "more distressed" than the other mice.

"Many were running round and round the basket, scrabbling desperately in the sawdust, and even frantically jumping up the sides—something I'd never seen before. For me, this was the most disconcerting evidence that GM food is not quite normal," said Hinze.

Another "interesting result" is that one of the mice in the GM cage was found dead at the end of the experiment.

Hinze's report was presented to the Dutch Parliament on December 11, 2001, and can be found at the website <http://www.talk2000.nl>.

(Sources: *The Ecologist*, June 2002; Dr Mae-Wan Ho's report at her website, <http://www.i-sis.org.uk>)



**"This computer projection says that in 20 years' time, water-fuelled cars will be perfected. That computer projection says that in 20 years' time, the scarcest resource will be water."**

## ALERT ON NEW FORM OF CJD

Two young men from Michigan who died from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) last (northern) autumn were only diagnosed because a specialist insisted on tests that wouldn't normally be done. He is now saying that when anyone, no matter how young, dies with suspicious neurological symptoms, there should be a post-mortem to check for CJD.

The men, aged 26 and 28, were brought to the University of Michigan hospital in Ann Arbor last summer with rapidly worsening neurological symptoms. One had severe epilepsy, the other had symptoms of dementia.

Norman Foster, the attending neurologist and a CJD specialist, says that, although neither man's symptoms fitted all the official criteria for the disease, he still pushed for biopsies. They revealed that each had a different form of sporadic CJD.

The pattern of brain lesions and an analysis of the prion proteins that caused the disease showed it was not vCJD, the human form of BSE. Nor did it look like the chronic wasting disease of deer that occurs in neighbouring Wisconsin, which some fear might also be transmissible to humans.

Foster warns that anyone who dies with dementia should be autopsied, and brain biopsies should be taken from young people who might have CJD.

(Source: *New Scientist*, May 11, 2002)

## BSE RISK FROM POLIO VACCINE

The UK drugs safety watchdog has been criticised for allowing polio vaccines made from banned cattle products to be given to hundreds of thousands of people.

Prof. Sir Liam Donaldson, the Chief Medical Officer, said the Medicines Control Agency (MCA) should have taken extra care and acted more proactively to stop the potential contamination with BSE-infected material in the late 1990s.

He accused drug companies of giving inaccurate information about vaccines, and called on the MCA to monitor the industry more carefully.

His report investigated a brand of oral polio vaccine recalled in October 2000 after fears that it could be contaminated with BSE.

The vaccine, one of two used in Britain, was made using British foetal calf serum dating from the mid-1980s.

(Source: *The Telegraph*, UK, June 7, 2002)

## PHthalATES IN COSMETICS

In May 2002, a coalition of American environmental and public health organisations contracted with a major national laboratory to test 72 name-brand, off-the-shelf beauty products for the presence of phthalates—a large family of industrial chemicals linked to permanent birth defects in the male reproductive system.

The laboratory found phthalates in 52 of 72 products tested—including nine of 14 deodorants, all 17 fragrances tested, six of seven hair gels, four of seven mousses, 14 of 18 hair sprays, and two of nine hand and body lotions—in concentrations ranging from trace amounts to nearly three per cent of the product formulation.

Major loopholes in federal law allow the US\$20-billion-a-year cosmetics industry to put unlimited amounts of phthalates into many personal care products—with no required testing, no required monitoring of health effects, and no required labelling.

To the coalition's knowledge, the 72 product tests detailed in the study represent the most comprehensive information available on the occurrence of phthalates in individual beauty care products.

None of the 52 phthalate-containing products lists the offending chemical on its ingredients label.

Phthalates damage the developing testes of offspring and cause malformations of the penis and other parts of the reproductive tract.

The same phthalates found to cause permanent harm of the male reproductive system in laboratory studies are also found in hair sprays, deodorants and fragrances—including those from big-name companies like Revlon, Calvin Klein, Christian Dior and Procter & Gamble. The

laboratory found phthalates in Pantene Pro V "Healthy Hold" and Aqua Net hairsprays, Arrid and Degree deodorants, and fragrances like Poison by Christian Dior and Coty's Healing Garden Pure Joy Body Treatment, to name just a few.

(Source: *Not Too Pretty* website, <http://www.nottoopretty.org/report.htm>)

## US SPACE AND STRATEGIC COMMANDS TO MERGE

As part of the ongoing initiative to transform the US military into a 21st-century fighting force, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld has announced the intention to merge two unified commands whose missions include control of America's nuclear forces, military space operations, computer network operations, strategic warning and global planning.

The intended merger of US Space Command (SpaceCom) and US Strategic Command (StratCom) is meant to improve combat effectiveness and speed up information collection and assessment needed for strategic decision-making.

"The missions of SpaceCom and StratCom have evolved to the point where merging the two into a single entity will eliminate redundancies in the command structure and streamline the decision-making process," said Rumsfeld.



"Oh, the Anglo guy in black? He left his mobile phone switched on during a film festival."

US Strategic Command, located at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, is the command and control centre for US nuclear forces. US Space Command in Colorado Springs, Colorado, commands military space operations, information operations, computer network operations and space campaign planning. Both commands are charged with countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

"StratCom and SpaceCom have successfully provided the capabilities to meet the nation's defense needs for many years," said Rumsfeld. "The merged command will be responsible for both early warning of and defense against missile attack as well as long-range conventional attacks."

The intended merger is scheduled to take place in October 2002, and the preferred location for the command headquarters is Offutt Air Force Base.

(Source: *US Department of Defense News Release No. 331-02, June 26, 2002*)

## UK PROPOSES ID CARDS TO COMBAT IDENTITY THEFT

A UK government consultation document reports that identity theft—where criminals use people's personal details to launder money, steal goods and open bogus bank accounts—is one of the fastest-growing crimes in Britain, rising by more than 50 per cent in the past year. In the first three months of this year, more than 10,000 cases were recorded, equal to half of all the cases recorded in 2001. Identity theft

is also the fastest-growing crime in the USA, with one in four families victimised.

The Home Office will now consider making identity theft a separate crime. At the moment, stealing someone's identity is not an offence; only gaining financially from it is.

The document proposes a universal entitlement card that would allow a "simple way to access public services". Benefit claimants would also use the card, which could contain health records, fingerprint information and bank details.

Home Secretary David Blunkett wants to make the card part of the "citizenship" debate, with legal residents in Britain receiving a positive sense of identity and rights to services by carrying it, and he has presented the scheme to the House of Commons. The proposal has been a never-realised pet project of both Labour and Conservative governments for more than 20 years.

Refusing to register for a card would probably be a punishable offence, but ministers indicated that they did not anticipate major efforts to enforce participation. They expected most people would want to "opt in" to the scheme because they would be denied services if they did not.

The creation of a card scheme could involve every UK resident aged 16 and over being issued with a new, unique, personal number.

(Sources: *The Observer, June 30, 2002; The Guardian, May 27 & July 3, 2002*)

## NSA PHONE TAPS MAY CONFIRM DIANA WAS PREGNANT

Lawyers acting for Mohamed al-Fayed say that the international electronic eavesdropping network *Echelon* intercepted telephone conversations in which Diana, Princess of Wales, discussed her marriage plans and pregnancy.

The *Echelon* station at Menwith Hill in northern England was reportedly used to intercept Diana's private phone calls, details of which are believed to be amongst hundreds of documents held by the US-based NSA. Mohamed al-Fayed's lawyers have been trying to secure the documents through the US Freedom of Information legislation, so far without success.

Mr al-Fayed has consistently maintained that Diana and Dodi were murdered by forces loyal to the monarchy because the Princess planned to marry a Muslim.

According to the London *Sunday Express*, Mr al-Fayed believes that Diana was under US surveillance because of her stance against landmines, which threatened US military interests.

(Source: *Sydney Morning Herald, June 24, 2002*)

## FBI SECRETLY CONTROLLED AMERICAN COMMUNIST PARTY

According to a recently released book, *The Secret History of the FBI* (St Martin's Press, NY) by veteran journalist Ronald Kessler, from 1954 onwards the FBI was essentially in charge of the activities of the Communist Party in the USA.

According to Kessler, in 1954 the FBI began running a top-secret operation code-named *Solo*, which entailed operating as an informant Morris Childs—the principal deputy to Gus Hall, head of the American Communist Party. In effect, Childs was the second-ranking official of the party and reported for 27 years on party activities and strategy, while making over 50 clandestine trips to the Soviet bloc, China and Cuba.

The FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover held the secret of *Solo* so tightly that officials in the CIA, NSA, Defense Department, State Department and National Security Council could only read reports of the operation while agents waited to return them to bureau headquarters.

Not until 1975 did the FBI inform the President and Secretary of State of the true source of the information.

(Source: Website <http://www.overthrow.com>, July 13, 2002)



## BRITAIN BLAMED FOR IRELAND'S HIDDEN HOLOCAUST

The politicians refer to it as "Ireland's greatest natural disaster", but, from 1845 to 1850, Ireland did not starve for food because of potato blight: it starved because its food, from 40 to 70 shiploads per day, was removed at gunpoint by 12,000 British constables reinforced by the British militia, battleships, excise vessels, the Coast Guard and 200,000 soldiers.

Britain seized from Ireland's producers tens of millions of head of livestock and tens of millions of tons of flour, grains, meat, poultry and dairy products—enough to sustain 18 million persons.

When the European potato crop failed in 1844 and food prices rose, Britain ordered regiments to Ireland. When blight hit the 1845 English potato crop, its food removal regiments were already mobilised in Ireland. Grossly overpopulated relative to its food supply, Britain faced famine unless it could import vast amounts of alternative food supplies. But it didn't grab merely Ireland's surplus food or enough Irish food to save England; it took more—for profit and to exterminate the people of Ireland.

Assuming Britain's census figures for Ireland are correct, revisionist historians are now claiming that the British government murdered approximately 5.16 million Irish men, women and children between 1845 and 1850.

(Source: <http://www.irishholocaust.org>)

## COLD WAR NUCLEAR TESTS STILL KILLING THOUSANDS

A US government study says that the fallout from Cold War nuclear tests carried out by the US, Britain, France and the Soviet Union has caused the deaths of an estimated 15,000 Americans—so far.

Excerpts of the report have been published on a website run by a watchdog group, the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (see <http://www.eer.org>). The study reported that everyone living on the US mainland has been exposed to fallout.

"The message is, we are all downwinders," said Bob Schaeffer of the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, a coalition of pressure groups. He said the report summary had not been made public because of unwillingness by governments to acknowledge the impact of past nuclear testing programs.

(Source: *The Guardian*, March 1, 2002)

## THE IQ OF GEORGE W. BUSH: HOW STUPID IS TOO STUPID?

by Sean Monkhouse

During a 1992 photo-op at a New Jersey elementary school, Dan Quayle urged a student to add an "e" to the word "potato". Even though Quayle was reading from a misspelled flashcard and had been guilty of several more-serious blunders, it was enough to confirm the suspicions of many Americans that Quayle was indeed a bumbling idiot not fit to be in office.

Ten years later, and US President George W. Bush is busy making Dan Quayle look like a brain surgeon. During his short presidency, Bush has trounced Quayle's record of misspelling and misspeaking and he is positively off the charts when it comes to his lack of world knowledge and basic social skills.

Despite the daily reminders of this idiocy, the press and the people remain silent. When Bush fumbles the first line of an important speech, or forgets what he is talking about or to whom he is talking, half of us nod in approval while the other half quietly grimace in disgrace.

Granted, with all that's going on today, it might seem trivial or untimely to focus on the President's IQ. After all, we still have terrorists to kill. But if George W. Bush can leave America in the middle of a "war", for European photo-ops and a meaningless treaty, we can take a little time away from criticising his policies and get down to the man himself. What better time to demand a smart President than when America needs one the most?

Take Bush's recent trip to Europe, where he visited several world leaders, signed a nuclear treaty with Russia's President Putin and had an audience with the Pope.

While meeting and greeting our nation's most important allies and negotiating with President Putin—leader of the USA's former nemesis, the USSR, now Russia—President Bush's behaviour ranged from the frat-boy humour that left many people awkwardly staring at the ground—like his thanking President Putin for mowing the lawn—to repeatedly forgetting what country he was in. Other blunders were a bit more profound. A video clip widely played in Europe shows the President of the United States spitting out his chewing gum into his hand before signing the "historic" Treaty of Moscow.

Bush's show of stupidity in Europe, humiliating as it was, doesn't even come close to the depths of idiocy reported last week [early June] by the German paper *Der Spiegel*. According to the article, during a meeting with Fernando Cardoso, Bush asked the following question to the 71-year-old President of Brazil: "Do you have blacks too?" Let that sink in for a second... "Do you have blacks too?"

President Cardoso, a sociologist, author and speaker of four languages, had little time to display his shock and horror before National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice tried to come to the rescue by explaining to Bush that Brazil did indeed "have blacks" and, in fact, was home to one of the largest black populations outside of Africa.

I can't think of a single reason that would absolve Bush of his blatant stupidity in this instance. If he were joking, which he wasn't, it would have been horribly tasteless and inappropriate at the very least. If he seriously didn't know that Brazil does "have blacks" but suddenly found himself interested in the subject, surely some synapse in that little brain of his would have fired, we would hope, and he would have said to himself: "Oh, this might not be the best time."

At the very least, he could have whispered the question to Rice and avoided the embarrassment and apprehensive grins that followed. Hell, he could have waited and looked it up online for himself. But no. Bush doesn't seem to care enough to go to that kind of trouble. Instead, he makes an ass out of himself and the country he leads.

Bush, with his non-existent education and his lack of desire to attain one, doesn't prep himself before meeting the leaders of the world or even express the faintest interest in other countries or their citizens. But right now, no one seems to mind. He can thank America's patriotic stupor for not calling him on such a moronic, telling and unexplainable question as "Do you have blacks too?" I'd like to see a new headline on *Newsweek's* cover: "The President Didn't Know!"

(Source: From an article by Sean Monkhouse, June 17, 2002, at the *Yellow Times* website, <http://www.YellowTimes.org>; also at the *Jeff Rense* website, <http://www.rense.com>)

"They underestimated me." — George W. Bush